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4 May 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of Mr. Maurice Oldfield, MI-6, by WH/4, Clark Simmons

1. In view of the request of Mr. Maurice Oldfield, MI-6 representative, for identities and further particulars regarding the Robert Morton Geddes case a meeting was held on 2 May 1961 with WH/4/CI, Clark Simmons, with Mr. Cleveland C. Cram and John C. Roberts of WE/6 also present.

2. At the outset Mr. Oldfield provided the following information:

a. Robert Morton Geddes is a British subject born in Lima, Peru, on 7 April 1932. He holds British passport No. C-34880, issued at Managua on 14 June 1956. He was not registered at the British Consulate in Havana and was regarded as being American or Canadian.

b. Two employees of the British Embassy, Havana, had visited Geddes in the Havana jail (military G-2 section) on Sunday evening, 30 April 1961, and had a 15-minute conversation with Geddes alone under circumstances which they felt were not monitored. Geddes stated to them: (1) On 19 April he was arrested by the militia (in civilian clothes) at his hotel; (2) He had been interrogated three times and gave the impression that he had not disclosed anything of importance; (3) He was accused of being a CIA agent and told that he could be shot because of the existence of civil war; (4) During the third interrogation Geddes was shown ~~that they have~~ a message in Spanish signed by Geddes which was sent allegedly by him by radio-transmitter asking that CIA send arms to Cuba.

c. The British Embassy in Havana learned on Saturday, 29 April 1961, that Geddes had regularly been "picked up" at the Havana airport on his trips to and from Miami. (Mr. Oldfield was not certain what exact interpretation could be given to the term "picked up").

3. After relating the above, Mr. Oldfield stated that his service is interested in obtaining an estimate of the sort of story the Cubans might use against Geddes or in provocation against the British Embassy, perhaps to prove that the British Embassy had been in collusion with the U. S. He referred to the following specific questions which he had submitted earlier on 2 May and which were relayed by WE/6 to WH/4; R. Hopkins for answers to be given in the afternoon session by Clark Simmons:

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3. a. What was the identity of the agent inside Cuba who gave GEDDES the message he brought to the CIA contact in Miami on 11 March 1961;

b. What was the identity--or name or names--used by the CIA case officer in Miami;

c. Was Geddes given any means of clandestine radio-transmission;

d. What were the instructions given to GEDDES by his case officer.

4. Mr. Simmons replied as follows:

a. The only means of communication given to Geddes, besides his open code phone contact with his wife in Boca Raton, was a very simple SW system. Geddes was not given any means for clandestine radio-transmission.

b. Simmons then read and related the following chronology of Geddes' activities from WH/4 files:

11 March: Geddes came to Miami on the night of 11 March and made contact with Cabbage/4, a Cuban in Miami who was in contact with the CIA office. Geddes had a message from Cabbage/1 a CIA contact inside Cuba. C-4 put Geddes in contact with a CIA case officer in Miami on 12 March. Geddes claimed to be an active member of the United Revolucionaria, a resistance group inside Cuba of which C-1 was a member. At the [illegible] Geddes said the Cuban Navy has a plan to attack all pro-Castro facilities and then flee Cuba on or about 22 March. Geddes did not ask for any money. His motivation was not known. The case officer instructions to Geddes were related solely to Geddes' report that the Cuban Navy would defect. Geddes returned to Havana.

16 March: Geddes departed for Havana.

20 March: We heard indirectly - Geddes had phoned his wife and indicated that the individual (C-1) with whom he had been collaborating in United Revolucionaria was in trouble. The fact behind this was that one of our agents (member of the UR) inside Cuba had against instructions visited his wife in Cuba. As a result a UR net of seven persons was arrested including C-1. Besides C-1, none of the others of this net knew of Geddes' activities.

21 March: Geddes returned to Miami.

26 March: Geddes came to Havana. He was given a simple SW system. Beginning about 26 March we had reason to suspect Geddes as a possible provocateur since the defection had not come off and possibility of keeping the defection of the Navy secret in itself was implausible.

27 March: Geddes sent a SW message to Miami regarding the possible Cuban Naval defection.

28 March: Through open code telecon with wife said defection of Navy set for 3 to 4 April.

29 March: Geddes called wife on telephone.

1 April: Geddes sent an SW message which was hand-carried to Miami by a courier. Geddes also had a telecon with his wife on this day.

2 April: Geddes said in telecon to wife that Naval conspirators would meet on 3 April and Geddes would give us on 5 April a final date for the defection.

4 April: Geddes indicated in telecon to wife that the Naval defection would take place "any day" now.

7 April: We received a message from Geddes delivered by a third party (courier) that the Navy plans to defect on 6 or 7 April. Geddes returned to Miami and said the date was now set for 8 or 9 April.

10 April: Geddes returned to Havana.

11 April: Geddes telephoned his wife that the defection could take place on 13 or 14 April.

16 April: Geddes in telecon with wife reported that the defection would be on 17 or 18 April.

c. During the account of the above chronology, Simmons made the following comments:

(1) The CIA agent inside (C-1) vouched for Geddes but we here in Headquarters do not know to what extent C-1 had probed into the background of Geddes and his contacts. We here did advise Miami not to take any action until we had obtained British concurrence but by that time Geddes had already returned to Havana. He reiterated that Geddes was a walk-in and was never treated as an agent.

(2) Geddes and his forecast regarding the defection of the Cuban Navy were suspect from the outset. He claimed to be a British citizen but was already performing for the U.S.

(3) To Mr. Oldfield's question as to whether Geddes had any access to a W/T man, Simmons replied that to his knowledge Geddes only had phone contact with his wife, SW and use of courier.

(4) No arms deliveries were involved in the contact with Geddes.

(5) Simmons said he would look into whom Geddes could contaminate or put the finger on.

(6) To Mr. Oldfield's ~~[illegible]~~ repeated request for identities of C-4, C-1, the Miami case officer, and the net that was arrested on 18 March, Simmons replied that only the DCI has the authority to release such information.

(7) The Miami case officer never served inside Cuba.

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5. After Mr. Oldfield had put a number of questions to Simmons the latter asked Oldfield whether Geddes is possibly a British agent which Oldfield emphatically answered in the negative.

6. Mr. Oldfield said that he would now send off a communication to his service indicating that Geddes might be a phoney—a provocateur. However, he asked that he be provided with the following:

a. CIA appreciation of the United Revolucionaria;

b. Identities of C-1, C-4 and members of the net with whom C-1 was arrested on March 18 (Note: Simmons acknowledged that besides C-1 conceivably several other members of this net might have known of Geddes and his activities.)

c. Identities of the couriers who had contact with Geddes

d. The identity of the CIA case officer--the name or names used by him in contacts with Geddes;

e. Chronological summary of the visits of Geddes to Miami and returns to Havana; also a list of the nature of his communications to Miami (by telecom, courier, etc.) and communications sent to him in Havana.

John G. Roberts
DC/WH/6

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